



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

1600 PACIFIC HIGHWAY, ROOM 335, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92101-2470

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: January 12, 2021

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

FRAMEWORK FOR OUR FUTURE: DECLARING RACISM A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS (DISTRICTS: ALL)

OVERVIEW

This Board Letter includes early actions for this newly constituted Board to publicly and openly acknowledge that racism is a public health crisis. Changes in our institutional systems must occur for the County of San Diego to be anti-racist and combat historic inequities.

As represented in this resolution titled, "Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis," there are historic health, social, economic, and criminal justice disparities, as well as bold actions that can be taken to substantially transform our county values, policies, practices, and community engagement to be more inclusive, responsive and anti-racist.

In declaring racism as a public health crisis, we are acknowledging that racism underpins health inequities throughout the region and has a substantial correlation to poor outcomes in multi-facets of life. As the public health agency for the region, the County has a responsibility to tackle this issue head on in order to improve the overall health of our residents. The public health and racist implications of County policies extends beyond those decisions in County Public Health Services to all departments. The measures proposed in this Board Letter will ensure that we are making decisions that promote health equity, are based on equity data, and engage our communities in a participatory process.

We strongly urge your support for the recommendations in this letter to infuse equity as a core principle of the Board of Supervisors and within the overall operations of the County of San Diego at every level.

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RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR NATHAN FLETCHER AND SUPERVISOR NORA VARGAS

- 1.) Approve resolution titled “Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis.”
- 2.) Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to:
 - a.) Create a process to solicit community input to identify county policies and practices that lead to or perpetuate racial or ethnic disparity, with the goal of catalyzing change for just, safe and healthier communities,
 - b.) Revise the statement of values, mission, vision, and strategic plan to represent equity and inclusion as a core principle of the County of San Diego and Board of Supervisors,
 - c.) Incorporate a section titled *Equity Impact Statement* in the Board Letter template for all county departments to identify and determine a systematic approach with standardized guidelines to express the equity impact of recommended actions,
 - d.) Enhance data collection capabilities to identify racial disparities among programs and services that are meant to improve health, social, economic, educational and criminal justice circumstances, and prioritize funding proportional to need when possible.
 - e.) Return to the Board of Supervisors within 90 days with an action plan to implement the direction above and identify the resources needed to achieve these requests.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with this action. There may be future fiscal impacts associated with final recommendations which would need to be approved by the Board.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

Our society must treat racism as the public health issue it is if we are going to improve health for all. The COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately impacting the lives of Black/African-Americans, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian American & Pacific Islander and all other people of color. This impact, coupled with the lasting negative consequences of racism that include economic

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instability, poverty, barriers to education, and overrepresentation in the criminal justice system, undermines our region's public health.

This Board Letter includes early actions for this newly constituted Board to publicly and openly acknowledge that racism exists, racism has many significant negative consequences, and changes in our institutional systems must occur in order to combat historic inequities. As represented in this resolution titled, "Resolution of the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Diego Declaring Racism a Public Health Crisis," there are historic disparities as well as bold actions that can be taken to symbolically and substantially adjust our county values, policies, procedures, practices, and community engagement to be more inclusive and responsive.

The adoption of this resolution will demonstrate this Board's commitment to lead with the needed change, becoming a more racially equitable and justice-oriented agency in service to all communities within our County.

On May 19, 2020, the Board approved the creation of a community-oriented Leon L. Williams San Diego County Human Relations Commission. Subsequently on June 23, 2020, the Board created the Office of Equity and Racial Justice. These two bold actions were steps in the right direction. Over the past six months, these agencies nominated commissioners, created bylaws, defined roles and responsibilities for both entities, and hired staff for the Office of Equity and Racial Justice. With these administrative steps now complete, the Board is ready to take this next step and provide concrete actions that we would like them to prioritize.

The Board of Supervisors needs to engage the community as we take inventory of our policies and practices using an equity lens. This is the only way to address systemic racism, implicit bias, and institutionalize equity as a core principle of the Board of Supervisors and the operations of the County of San Diego. These actions will further the health, wellness and equity of all San Diegans.

We strongly encourage you to support the attached resolution, and direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to conduct a community engagement process, incorporate equity in the County's value statements and plans, develop a data driven process to determine how the proposed Equity Impact Statement should be construed and evaluated for board letters, and improve data collection capabilities to show racial disparities and direct county resources proportional to demonstrated need when possible. If approved, the CAO will return to the Board in 90 days with feedback from listening sessions and recommendations for action related to the other action items in this letter.

LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed actions support the Live Well San Diego Initiative in the County's Strategic Plan, and its vision for San Diego that is Building Better Health, Living Safely, Thriving, by supporting and empowering communities of color.

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Respectfully submitted,

Handwritten signature of Nathan Fletcher in black ink.

NATHAN FLETCHER
Supervisor, Fourth District

Handwritten signature of Nora Vargas in black ink.

NORA VARGAS
Supervisor, First District

ATTACHMENT(S)
RESOLUTION

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: ☐ Yes ☒ No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED

☐ Yes ☒ No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:

N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:

N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:

N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:

N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):

N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Fourth and First Board of Supervisors Districts

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

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